

A

Present for a PRIEST;
OR, THE
LAYMAN'S Address
TO THE
CLERGY:

Being a Dissertation

On JOHN XXI. 15, 16, 17.

WHEREIN

The IMPOSTURE of the ~~pope's~~
Supremacy, is occasionally de-
tected, and fully confuted.

O Tempora ! O Mores !

CIC.

*Thou that preachest a Man should not steal,
Dost thou steal ?*

PAUL.



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Address

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THE
P R E F A C E.

I *I was with some Reluctance that I prevailed upon myself to make the following Speculation public—knowing I must of necessity disoblige some of the Clergy, quite contrary to a favourite Maxim with me — Make no one your Enemy.*

*But the Zeal I have conceived for shewing (at this Time more particularly) the Pope and his Banditti in their proper Colours, hath effectually superseded all other Considerations, and in a manner compell'd me to send these Gospel Reflections into the World, tho' un-
bless'd with the Sanction of Church Authority.*

If Christ is the Head of the Church, (as all Christians in their Wits must allow) and the Clergy are his Deputies, Stewards of the Mysteries of Godliness, to whose Care the Welfare of Souls is wholly committed, and for whom they must be accountable at the great Day
of

of Judgment — What manner of Persons ought they to be?

Not like the Men of this World, Drunkards, Adulterers, Fornicators, Covetous, Proud, Voluptuous, Uncharitable, Oppressors, unmerciful to Man and Beast, But

Sober, chaste, abstemious, holy, heavenly-minded, humble, charitable, humane, and religiously possess'd of all those Virtues which render a Man lovely in the Eye of his Fellow-Creature, and highly acceptable in the Sight of God.

Now, if contrary to the well-being of Society, and the Prosperity of the Church of Christ, there are Pastors who are in any Shape to be concluded under the first Class, it is high Time for them to look into themselves, and set about a Reformation.

Confident I am, that at the best, there are too many that are stiled Reverend, who look upon the Desk as a Drudgery, and the Pulpit an Ergastulum; and others,

That live retir'd from consecrated Air,
And leave to menial Crape, the Load of Prayer,

How such Men can account for the Sheep committed to their Care, that none of them be lost, must be a Revelation of the last Day.

The stale Preachment, Do as I say, will (I fear) avail but little in that solemn Period,
when

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when Example, (it is well known) hath the strongest Influence, over the Minds and Manners of the Generality of Mankind.

Besides, this Caution, so far from having any good Effect, is apt to run the Laity into Notions of Libertinism, upon a too well grounded Presumption, That the Parson does not in his Heart, believe those musty Doctrines of Self-Denial, Sobriety, Chastity, Charity, &c. which he is sometimes forc'd, for Lucre's sake, to recommend.

Far be it from me, however, to insinuate, or even suppose, that the Body of Clergy are unfaithful, or remiss in their Gospel-Functions: For I verily believe, and am persuaded, that many of them are worthy Men, Men of Learning, Conscience, and Fidelity.

God forbid! therefore, that the sacred Office should be brought into Contempt and Ridicule, thro' the corrupt Practices of a Parcel of Temporising Demas's and False Brethren.

Neither would I be understood, in the Course of these Reflections, to confine myself to the Clergy only; but under that Denomination to comprehend impartially, All those who call themselves Spiritual Pastors, Teachers, or Speakers, among the various Sectaries tolerated in this Kingdom — and are no better than they should be.

Qui

Qui capit, Ille facit.

*Nor do I here pretend to much Learning,
abundance of Reading, Elegancy of Stile, or
Poignancy of Wit ; but,*

Magna est veritas & prævalebit.

*'All-searching Truth shall one Time force its
Way,
'And Hell and Judgment shake our conscious
Clay.*

Reader, Farewel.





JOHN XXI. 15, 16, 17.

So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

He saith to him again the second time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

IF we may be allow'd to judge by Consequences, The Pastoral Office, or in other Words, The Cure of Souls, is a Charge of the last Importance, and in these Days requires almost Apostolic Talents for the due Execution of it. — *Atheism, Villany, and Hypocrisy*, with a numerous Train of vicious Dependents, being never at such a Crisis since the dreadful Catastrophe of *Sodom and Gomorrah*.
The

The impudent *Atheist* makes a Jest of every Thing that is sacred; libels all *Revelation*; laughs at *Eternity*; and scruples not, in his Frolicks, to challenge the All-wise Author and Upholder of his ungrateful Being, with *Folly* and *Inconsistency*. The *first* and *second Covenants* are, with him, contemptible Schemes; and *Moses*, and *Christ*, a Couple of Impostors.

The bare Villain is not perhaps quite so far advanced in this blasphemous Impiety; yet he secretly wishes, and almost persuades himself, that *there is no God*.

These may possibly be reclaimed; a *Fever* sometimes cures the Levity of the one, and the *Gallows* may bring the other, to a *Lord have Mercy on me*.

But the Hope of the *Hypocrite* shall perish eternally.

I shall not take upon me to ferret this Monster out of all his Subterfuges, only hint at a few of his equivocal Fallacies.

Covetousness, that most destructive of Vices, he obtrudes upon the World for *Frugality*; *Prodigality* and *Extravagance* are stiled *Generosity* and *Liberality*; *Fornication* and *Adultery* are extolled for *Gallantry*; *Drunkenness* sets up for *Good-Fellowship*; and *Voluptuousness* is, modestly call'd, the Enjoyment of the good Things of this *Life*. *Pride* pretends to the Title of *Neatness* with some, and

and *Reservedness* with others ; *Bigotry* and *Enthusiasm* lay claim to *Religion* ; and *Ostentation* assumes the blessed Name of *Charity* ; trading *Impositions* are current for innocent Craft ; Over-reaching *Frauds* for *Policy* and *Fineness of Wit* ; and *Compliance* with the Law, boasts of Justice and Honour (the Reverse of *Ovid's* * *Primitives*) with many others of the like Stamp, best known to those whose Tongues, Hearts and Actions rarely correspond. Through this Palliation of Iniquities the Poison insensibly takes Effect, and operates so habitually on the *Hypocrite's* Mind, that the grand Guard of the Soul, *Conscience*, being by imperceptible Degrees decoy'd into a Lethargy, he becomes immoral, unjust, cruel, uncharitable, &c. — without Remorse, or suspecting himself in Danger from a future Account.

The *Atheist* has his Intervals, and the Villain his Horrors ; but the *Hypocrite* hugs himself with Surmises of doing no Harm ; opiates all Reflection with Appearances of Devotion, and falls to Perdition, thro' a long Series of pharisaical Delusions practis'd upon himself. *Luke xviii. v. 11, 12.*

These, and innumerable other Enormities, call aloud for immediate Inspection, and a

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speedy

* *Sponte sua, sine Lege, fidem rectumque colebant.*

They knew no Law, but mutual Faith and Trust,
 Were steady Friends, and scorn'd to be unjust,

speedy Reformation, lest the Hand of God, which seems to hang over us, should fall heavy upon us, and *Popery*, with its Terrors, be sent among us as a Scourge and Penance, too grievous to be borne, and too late to be repented of.

Which by God's Mercy to avoid, and as a Means conducing thereto, I shall endeavour, in the Course of this Tract, to rouse the Shepherds (I mean those that want it) to awaken the Sheep committed to their Care, out of their present dangerous Lethargy.

I come now to the Words of my Text, wherein we are to consider

- I. The Person speaking.
- II. The Person spoken to.
- III. The Persons spoken of.
- IV. The Charge given.
- V. The Time of giving the Charge, and then conclude.

First, The Person speaking. *Christ*, the grand Shepherd and covenanted Proprietor of the Flock, purchased with his own Blood an invaluable Purchase! Wonderful! that the * Lord of All should lay down his most precious Life for the Redemption of a lost and untoward Generation, the Offspring of rebellious Man.

How grievous the Crime, that required so great Satisfaction! That no less than the myste-

* Acts x. v. 36.

† Mat. xviii. v. 11.

mysterious Unity of *God* and *Man* should become a Sacrifice of Atonement !

Awake ye Sinners, wonder, and adore the gracious Recoverer of your * Sight and Liberties ! Sleep no more, but lay hold on proffered Mercy ; *Christ*, † the Light of the World, calleth you ; Why will ye sit in Darkness stupidly incredulous ? Why will ye refuse to hear ‡ that Voice, which (if obey'd) will entitle you to everlasting Happiness ? *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they will follow me. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.*

What Encouragement is here, for every (otherwise undone Soul) to throw itself under the Tutelage, Guidance and Protection of so powerful, so watchful, so indulgent a Shepherd !

What Obstacles (I beseech you) are in the Way, that impede your closing with such gracious Assurances ? Hath *Pride* filled your Hearts ? See the || holy Babe, the Heir of all Things, laying in a Manger ! Hath *Covetousness* straitned your Minds ? Look upon *Jesus*, distributing ** the *Loaves* and *Fishes* ! And mark the End of the rich †† *Man* and his *Barus*. Hath *Voluptuousness* swallowed

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* Luke iv. v. 18.

† John viii. v. 12.

‡ John x.

v. 27. 28.

|| Luke ii. v. 7.

** Mat. xiv. v. 15.

†† Luke xii. v. 15, &c.

up your Senses ; Remember *Christ*, his * long Fast and Temptation ! Hath *Idleness* got hold of you ? Behold your Saviour † praying in the Garden till he sweats Drops of Blood ! Are you impatient under Injuries ? Follow *Jesus* into ‡ *Pilate's* Hall ; || and to the Cross ! Are you *revengeful* ? Think upon his § dying Words ; Observe how passionately he prays for his Accusers, Judges and Executioners.

Secondly, I am to consider, The Person spoken to. *Peter*, who is recorded in Scripture as first called to be a Disciple, and likewise first upon the List of *Christ's* Apostles, for which Reason probably it was, that our Saviour addresses himself to him in the Presence of the rest ; not that *Peter* was thereupon constituted Lord of the whole Flock throughout the World (as the *Papists* vainly assert) but by way of general Admonition to all Pastors to be diligent in their Calling, wheresoever appointed ; as *Peter* himself confesses, *Acts* x. v. 41, 42. where speaking of *Christ's* Resurrection, that he was shewn not to all the People, but unto Witnesses chosen before of God, even to us, who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the Dead, and commanded us (mark the Time, and we shall find it has exact Reference to the Charge in my Text) to preach unto the

* Mat. iv. v. 2. † Luke xxii. v. 44. ‡ Mark xv. v. 16. || Mark xv. v. 29. § Luke 23. v. 34.

the People, a synonymous Term, with *Feeding the Lambs and the Sheep*.

But further, to put this Singularity of *Peter* out of all Question, *Matthew* clothes his Gospel with our Saviour's general Charge to the *Eleven* *.

Nay, *Luke* proceeds farther, and enlarges the Number to all faithful and wise Stewards of *Christ's* Household to the End of all Things †; where *Peter*, after our blessed Saviour had forewarn'd his Disciples of Watchfulness, says unto him, *Lord, speakest thou this parable unto us, or even to all?* Whereupon *Christ* resolves him, and declares the Intention of his Admonition to affect every *Pastor* in all Countries, and in all Ages.

And moreover, he distinguishes the *Faithful* by their peculiar Care of the Flocks, whereof they are ordain'd *Overseers*, in giving them their Portion of Meat in due Season. Pray what is this, but *feeding the Sheep*?

These Quotations plainly demonstrate, that this Charge of our Saviour's *Feed my Lambs, Feed my Sheep*, was deliver'd to the Apostles in general, and their Descendants, without Reserve of Superiority to *Peter*, and are manifest Refutations of the *Papal Usurpation*, together with all its Legends, Fopperies, and Cruelties.

Well may the *Papists* then set aside the Evidence of Scripture, in all Controversies between

* Mat. xxviii. v. 16, to the End. † Luke xii. v. 41, to 50.

tween the *Protestant* and *Romish Church*; and, instead thereof, trump up *infamous* and *heretical Traditions*, and unscriptural Decrees of *foam Councils*; the sordid Effects of prelatical Pride and Rapacity.

For the maintance whereof, what Heaps of Frippery have they not interpolated and impos'd on their credulous Votaries?

Their holy *Cheats*, lying *Miracles*, *Indulgences*, *Purgatories*, *Limbuffes*, *Crosses*, *Images*, *Agnus Dei's*, *Holy Water*, *Masses*, *Canonizations*, *Prayers to Saints*, *Baptizing of Bells*, *Excommunications*, *Fulminations*, *Inquisitions*, *Confessions*, *Massacres*, *Plots*, *Perjuries*, and a thousand other Rogueries besides; which every *Jesuit*, *Pope*, and *Cardinal*, knows to be such; and, laughing among themselves, at the Stupidity of the *Populace*, gloats their Impositions with the soft Appellation of *Pious Frauds*.

But 'tis no wonder, when their *Doctors* are pleas'd to tell you, without blushing, That the Scripture is a *Nose of Wax*, a dead *Letter*, &c. and that the *Pope* can dispense with the Laws of *Nature*, the *Rules* of the *Apostles*, the Form of the Words in *Baptism*, and even with *Divine Right* itself.

Others affirm, that the *Pope* can dispense also with, and against the *New Testament*, with the *Epistles* of *St. Paul*; and some of them go so far, as to say, That the *Pope* can dispense with the *Precepts* of the *Old and New Testament*.

Upon

Upon these devilish Principles, * *Albertus Pighius* blasphemes, and calls the holy Word of God ; — *Nasus cereus qui se horsum, illorsum, & in quamcunque volucris Partem trahi, retrahi, fingique facile permittit.* — In English thus ; “ A Nose of Wax, that easily suffers itself to be drawn backward and forward, this way and that way, and any way.” — And in another Place he, says, † *Sunt enim Scripturae muti Iudices.* — “ The Scriptures are dumb Judges.”

Another Fellow, a Canon of the Church of *Lateran*, in the late Council of *Trent*, had the Impudence (without Reproof) to assert in an Oration, ‡ That *Scriptura est quasi mortuum Atramentum* ; “ The Scripture is dead Ink.”

And the Bishop of *Poictiers*, to confirm the said Canon's Blasphemy, did, in the said Convent, aver, That || *Scriptura est res inanimata & muta, sicut etiam sunt reliquæ Leges politicae* ; “ The Scripture is a dead and dumb Thing, like all other Political Laws.”

No wonder then, that *St. Paul* cannot pass without a Fling of their Scurrility, § *Augustinum vetustas sua tuetur ; qui se revivisceret cum Paulo certè ille contemptus esset Rhetorculus aut Grammaticulus ; Paulus verò vel insannire*

* Pighius Hierarch. lib. 3. cap. 3.

† Idem, Contro. 3.

‡ Flaccus Illiricus Normā in Concil. || Johannes Meidanus, lib. 23.

§ Ludovicus Vives, lib. 15. de Civitate Dei.

n. 24.

nira vel Hereticus videretur : *Augustine* is safe now for his Antiquity ; but if he and *Paul* were alive again, he would be despised as a pitiful Rhetorician, or poor Grammarian, and *Paul* (truly) would be accounted a Mad-man or an Heretick

But the Triple Crown Successor of *St. Peter* he verily must be, *Alter Deus in Terra*, with some ; while others cry, *Christus in Cælo præsidet, Papa in Terris residet* ; *Christ* is Prince in Heaven, the *Pope* on Earth.

Whereupon *Nicholas Lyra* in his Gloss on *Deut. xvii. v. 11*. " According to the Sentence of the Law which they shall teach thee, " and according to the Judgment which they shall tell thee, thou shalt do ; thou shalt not decline from the Sentence which they shall shew thee, to the Right Hand, or the Left " prescribes thus,—*Si dixerint tibi quod dextra est sinistra, aut quod sinistra est dextra tali Sententia est tenenda*. If they (the *Pope* and his Emissaries) tell thee that thy Right Hand is thy Left, or thy Left Hand thy Right, you ought to be of that Opinion. Who would think that any Man in his natural and proper Senses can be a *Papist* ?

From what has been alledg'd, we may observe, That the Successors of *Peter* can deny their *Lord* and *Master* as stoutly as ever *Peter* did ; but with this material Difference that *he repented* : But these are so drunk with Power, and greedy of Gain, that they

is no Hopes of a Papal Recantation. — *Can the Ethiopian change his Skin ?*

How is it to be expected therefore, that Men trained up in such *loose Principles*, can possibly be true to *God or Man* ? swear what they will to a *Protestant Prince*, or *Protestant Neighbour*, they have *Indulgence* and *Abso- lution* in their Pockets to countenance any *Plot* ; and for Reward of their Villainy (if deep) are sure to be *canoniz'd*.

What an *Anti-Protestant Oath* was that, which the *Militant Fathers* of the Council of *Trent*, were every one of them oblig'd to swallow before they were admitted to vote !

*EGO N. &c. Papatum Romanæ Ecclesiæ
& Regulas sanctorum patrum adjutor
ero, ad defendendum & retinendum, salvo or-
dine meo, contra omnes homines : That is to say,*

“ *I N. &c.* will be one to defend and main-
“ *tain the Papacy of the Church of Rome,*
“ *and the Commands of the Holy Fathers (the*
“ *Popes of Rome) against all Men living :”*
Or in the true Sense of the Words, thus : “ *I*
“ *N. &c.* will be one that will contribute all
“ *my Might and Malice towards cursing, tor-*
“ *turing, and destroying all heretical Protest-*
“ *ant Dogs whatsoever, that have the Impu-*
“ *dence*

“ dence to *abjure* the *Pope's Authority*, and
 “ dare to assert, that *Christ is King* in his
 “ *own Kingdom.*”

What can we expect from such a Cut-throat Crew, but *Plots* and *Conspiracies*, to extirpate us and our Posterity, our dear *Religion, Liberty* and *Property*, to make Way for a *Popish Machine*, subject to the *Dictates* of *France, Spain, and Rome?*

To give a Specimen of what we may expect from the *mild Administration* of the last, let us have Recourse to the *Principles* of those *Holy Fathers* which are to be maintained against *all Men*—*Totis viribus.*

Pope *Boniface* (that notorious Usurper) with as surprising *Arrogance* as *Falshood*, assumes an *Universal Power* over all Nations, as well in *Temporals* as *Spirituals*, and most ridiculously founds his Pretence on that Scripture (well may they call it a *Nose of Wax*) *Luke xxii. v. 28.* Here are *two Swords*, absolutely foreign to his Purpose, there being not so much as the Shadow of a Figure intended, but *two* downright *Swords* of *Arm-
munition*—*Hilt and Blade.*

No matter for that, allegorical or real, *two Swords* there are, and metamorphos'd they shall be, to emblematical Ensigns of his *Holi-
ness's Authority* and *Sovereign Tyranny.*

If his *Temporal Sword* is too short, out goes his *Spiritual One*, with *Fulminations*, *Excommunications*, *Anathemas*, *Bell*, *Book*, and *Candle*, *Cursing*, *Blustering*, and *Damning* all that stand in his Way. The Lord defend us from such Insolence, and stir up the *Legislature* to rid this Land of *Papists* !

For my Part, I could wish for a general Transportation of them, if it suited with our Constitution ; or else that their *Priests* (for the Benefit of the next Generation) might (instead of hanging, which they value not so much as Canonization) * be handled as they were formerly, and I believe still are in *Sweden* and *Denmark*, and this by the Advice of a converted *Nun* (as my Author says) which I take to be an effectual Way to stop their Growth *here*, as well as in the Places aforementioned : Kingdoms that were once very much infested with *Popish Emissaries*, but of late Years (says the same Author) a Man may travel thro' City, Town, and Country, an hundred Miles, and not meet with, or so much as hear of a *profess'd Papist*.

I shall conclude this Head with one more Quotation from Scripture ; the *Protestant*, and in Truth the only Test of the *Christian Religion*,

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* If *Popish* Capons must the Land infest,
E'en make a Capon of each *Popish Priest*.

Daily Gazetteer, Jan. 7, 1746.

Religion, and challenge the *Conclave* to answer it *without waxing it*.

It is a remarkable one, touching the Doctrine of *Church Supremacy*.

For there happen'd once to be a sort of Contest among the Apostles about it, which our Saviour judicially determined, *Luke xxii. v. 24, 25, 26. And there was also a strife among them (the Apostles) which of them should be accounted the greatest. And He (Jesus) said unto them, The Kings of the Gentiles exercise Lordship over them, and they that exercise Authority upon them, are called Benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.* The Words are so explicit, they need no Gloss. I shall proceed, therefore, in the next Place to consider very briefly,

Thirdly, The Persons spoken of; The *Lambs* and the *Sheep: Feed my Lambs, Feed my Sheep.* A Metaphor signifying the *Church*, however distress'd, or wheresbever dispersed, All *Believers*, Young and Old, of all *Climates* and *Complexions*; for of a Truth, God is no Respector of Persons.

These various People hath *Christ* collected into one Body, and this Body, thus united, were by the Apostles called *Christians* first at *Antioch*.

We indeed, by Descent, and the Chance of Birth, have the blessed Name devolv'd upon us.

But

But how degenerate, how Apostate from the *Primitive Church*, is a most melancholy Reflection ; especially when we consider ourselves bless'd not only with the Privileges of *Revelation*, but with all the Advantages of *ExtraInformation*, flowing from two of the most learned Universities in *Europe*.

But, alas ! the *Lust* of the *Flesh*, the *Lust* of the *Eye*, and the *Pride* of *Life*, have perverted our Hearts, gain'd the Dominion of our Affections, and banished quite all Christian Purity, Truth, and Loyalty.

The virtuous *Heathens* were infinitely preferable to the Bulk of *Modern Christians*, with their *Bibles* in their Hands.

Who must account principally for this fatal falling off from our first Love, comes properly under the next general Head. Namely,

Fourthly, The Charge given ; *Feed—Feed my Lambs, Feed my Sheep*. Pray observe the emphatical Repetition (in my Text) of this Paternal Charge. Thrice did our blessed Lord enjoin *Peter*, and thro' him the rest of the Apostles, to *feed his Lambs, and his Sheep* ; a *Duty* of the utmost Consequence to the Welfare of his *Flock*.

As if he should say, *I am now to bid you Farewell. While indeed I was present with you, I took care myself, that neither you nor my Sheep should want that Spiritual Food I have received from my Father. I have in like manner*

manner furnished you with proper Gifts and Graces for the fulfilling of this my Will : Look to it well, that as I have thus graciously fed you, even so provide ye (in my corporeal Absence) for the Flocks wherewith I have entrusted you.

They did so, and having receiv'd the Gift of Tongues, they encreased their Flocks, faithfully proclaiming the Name of *Christ* among all People, Nations and Languages ; and being in due Time called upon to follow their Master's great *Example*, they triumphantly sealed the Truth of their Ministry, by the Effusion of their loyal Blood.

These were no *sham Followers*, no *fair-weather Disciples* ; but stood fast by the Truth, as it is in *Jesus*, thro' all the Storms of *Persecution* and Terrors of *Torments*.

Who of us, *fashionable Christians*, would stand the *Buffets* and *Brunts* the Apostles endur'd, and look *Barbarity* in the Face with *Serenity*, for the Sake of the *Gospel* ?

Very few, I doubt, by Appearance. No : We love our *bodily Ease* too much to court ill Usage, Imprisonment, Tortures, and Death, for the Name of *Christ*.

Covetousness and *Hypocrisy* on the one Hand, *Licentiousness* and *Luxury* on the other, have entirely suppress'd the ancient Sense of *Christian Faith*, and the zealous Practice

Practice of *Christian Duties*, and made traitorous Cowards of the Bulk of *Modern Professors*.

Very few of us have Courage enough to resist those very Temptations that we know will necessarily destroy us.

Our *Appetites* and *Passions* overwhelm us, and instead of dying *Martyrs* for *Christ*, we become *Sacrifices* for the *Devil*.

Gold, that mischievous *Idol* of Mankind, and *Pander* to our *Lusts*, is follow'd by all, tho' with different Views; some to amass, and others to squander, while the Business of *Salvation* is wholly neglected, and our *Souls* entrapped by the *yellow Snare*. *Mony, Mony*, is the Cry, *Give us but Mony, we'll trust for Eternity*.

But the Prophet *Jeremy* handsomely rebukes these Worldings. *Jer. ix. v. 23. Let not the rich Man glory in his Riches, nor the great Man in his Honours, but in that he knows God*: So that the Labours and Anxieties of Men, to procure *Trophies, Lands, or Riches* for themselves and their Children, are extream Folly, and by no Means so acceptable to God, and so much for their real Profit as to experience themselves, and to teach their Children the Knowledge of the Most High. This is true Wisdom; it produces *solid Peace* and *substantial Joys*: The other is downright Folly,

Folly, it breeds *Perplexities*, entails *Disquietudes*, and ends in *Misery*.

The Question then will be, Whence ariseth all this *Bigotry* to *Vanity* and *Listlessness* to *spiritual* Things, if the *Sheep* go thus astray? Methinks the *Shepherds* must be somewhat to blame. Surely they do not take that *Pastoral* Care of their *Flocks* which the Grand *Shepherd* hath enjoyn'd. Do they *watch* over them, and *feed* them with *Food* convenient for them? Or, Are they idle, careless and unexemplary in their *Lives* and *Conversations*? Are they *covetous* and *parasitical*? Or, Is their *Time*, *Thoughts* and *Affections* too much attach'd to *sublunary Fancies*? Trifles, worse than Trifles, compar'd with the permanent Joys and beatifick Fruitions of the heavenly State.*

Wo be to such *Pastors*! *Hypocrites*, which render the blessed Word of none Effect, which was mercifully calculated to save themselves and their *Sheep* from everlasting Perdition.

Why will ye die, O house of Israel? why will ye despise the Mercies of *Christ*, and withhold the Means of Grace from those above you?

Awake, ye Dreamers, look to yourselves, recover your *Flocks* (if possible) before it is too late, and the fatal Account is demanded at your Hands.

Think

* Rom. ii. v. 16, 25.

Think of St. *Paul*, how diligent, how faithful, how exemplary a Shepherd he was ! how much he endur'd for the Sake of *Truth*, and how greatly he triumph'd over the *World*, the *Flesh* and the *Devil* !

Refresh your Memories with those pious Instructions, contain'd in his *Pastoral Letter* to *Timothy*, his beloved Son in the Lord †, and seriously reflect on that solemn Charge of his to the same * *I charge thee, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead at his appearing, and his Kingdom: Preach the Word, be instant, in Season and out of Season; approve, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and Doctrine. And again, at the 5th Verie. But watch thou in all Things, endure Afflictions, do the Work of an Evangelist, make full Proof of thy Ministry.*

As if the Apostle should say to his beloved Preacher (and thro' him to *all Pastors* whatsoever) *Thou hast now, Timothy, accepted the Office of a Bishop, or Overseer of the Church of Christ, I charge thee be constant, and do the Duty of a faithful Shepherd in all Things, as thou shalt answer the contrary, when I shall confront thee at the solemn Bar of our Sovereign Lord Jesus Christ.*

D

But

† 2 Tim. ii. from v. 1. to v. 16.

* 2 Tim. iv. v. 1, 2.

But more especially be not entangled with worldly Affairs, that your whole *Time, Strength,* and *Study* may be employ'd towards the Service of God in the *Pulpit, the Family,* and the *Closet.*

For, adds the Apostle, by way of Caution, *There are those that have dropt off from the Faith, thro' an inordinate Affection to the Things of this World; Demas for one; for Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present World.* If St. Paul were now alive, I fear he would have too much Reason to complain of some *Demas's* in these Days. Men who well understand the personal and sensual Application of the Word *Feed,* but basely neglect the *relative* and *spiritual* Use of it, thro' an overweaning Inclination to indulge their own irregular *Appetites* and *Affections.*

From such *Examples* (were they but few) a City may be over-run with Wickedness, the *Sabbath* prophan'd, and the sacred Name of our great *Creator* and *Redeemer* blasphemed in the *Alehouse, the Street,* and the *Assembly.*—I come now in the last Place to consider,

Fifthly, The Time of giving this Charge and then conclude. Our blessed Saviour having perform'd every Tittle of his Father's Will concerning the *Redemption* of Mankind, is

now

now risen with his glorious Body, and preparing to ascend into Heaven, he takes this his last Leave of his Apostles.

But so anxious was he (as an *Example* to all *Teachers*) lest he should be any way defeated of the Fruits of his Coming, thro' the Frailty of human Nature. He takes upon him, before his Departure, to remind his *Followers* of the principal End of his Doctrine, in these Words, *Feed my Lambs, Feed my Sheep*; for as earthly *Food* is absolutely necessary to the Existence, Growth, and Activity of the *outward Man*, in like manner, the *Soul*, (that more precious Moiety of our Being) must be *nourish'd, improv'd, and strengthened* in its *spiritual* Operations by the sincere *Milk* of the *Word of God*. Take heed, therefore, O ye *Modern Pastors*! that ye fulfil this Charge of your blessed Master, given to *Peter* and the rest of his Apostles; for as much as it is undeniably true, That you being their *Successors*, are undoubtedly included therein, and bound thereto.

You cannot but be sensible (in the first Place) that *Religion* is the surest Foundation of *Peace* and *good Order* in the Commonwealth; therefore, (as Fellow-Subjects) it is incumbent on you, in your *Publick Capacity*, to enforce the constant Practice of *Christian Duties*.

But

But when we consider further, That the *Souls* of Men, in this Life, are committed to your Care, as Subjects training up for an heavenly Kingdom, and that every *Soul* is worth a World, How careful ! How solicitous ! How watchful ! How diligent ought you (the Representatives of *Peter*) to be *in Season* and *out of Season* ! Exhorting, reproving, comforting and condemning, if the Case requires !

If you approve the *Sanctity* and *Solemnity* of your Office, and believe that you are set apart to minister to the People in holy Things, let me entreat you, for the Good of your own *Souls*, the Glory of *Christianity*, and the *Salvation* of Mankind, to disengage yourselves at once, from all *private, sensual, unworthy, and inconsistent Views*,—*Views* that are infinitely distant from the *Institution* of your Office, and unquestionable Obstacles to the due Execution of it.

Fix your *Affections* on heavenly Things only, which are the true Touch-stone of *Ministerial Sincerity*.

For, let him be who he will, whether an *Orthodox Preacher*, or a *Dissenting Teacher*, if, instead of laying out his whole Self in the Service of God and his Church, he is *malicious, worldly-minded, profane, injurious, covetous, voluptuous, or uncharitable* ; he is no longer a *Shepherd*, but a *Destroyer*, not a *Feeder*.

Feeder but a *Devourer*, and will have his Portion at last with *false Christs*, *false Prophets*, and *false Teachers*.

Recollect yourselves, therefore, O ye *Ministring Shepherds*! Lose not a Moment, but gather your *Flocks* into their proper *Folds*; make a new List of your several *Charges*; open a fresh Account of their *Numbers* and *Qualities*. What has been amiss, redress; what is wanting, supply, that ye may be able hereafter to look St. *Paul* and the rest of the *Christian Patriots* (your glorious Predecessors) in the Face with Joy, when the grand Trumpet shall sound.

And now to conclude this small Tract, I shall quote the Words of a faithful Apostle: *Finally, my Brethren, whatsoever Things are honest, whatsoever Things are just, whatsoever Things are pure, whatsoever Things are lovely, whatsoever Things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, and if there be any Praise, THINK ON THESE THINGS.*

P O S T-

POSTSCRIPT.

NO Man can doubt the Certainty of a future State, but he must first deny his Bible.

And the *New Testament* being the Foundation and Foundation of our *Practice*, as well as of *Faith*, whosoever refuseth or neglecteth to measure his Actions by that unerring Law (let him harangue his Audience ever so politely) is unworthy of the *Pulpit*, and the *Benches* annex'd to it.

Why should a Man that appeareth to deny the *Altar* partake with the *Altar*?

If we are to shew our *Faith* by our *Works*, that Man (especially in Office) is much to be suspected, touching the Soundness of his *Faith*, that acts diametrically opposite even to Moral Precepts.

The best of Men (it is true) are but Men at the best; the Angels themselves are not perfect, much less can Flesh and Blood pretend to Perfection.

David and *Peter* had their Failings, and gross ones too.

But when Men (without blushing) proceed in an open Course of offending Decency, and are

are habitually vicious, they afford the World monstrous Opportunities to suspect their Fidelity to Truth, and the *Gospel Dispensation*.

Let such of the Clergy (if any such there be) but seriously read the 13th Chapter of *Mark*, beginning at the 13th Verse.

Heaven and Earth, says Christ, *shall pass away, but my Words shall not pass away* — They are establish'd to Eternity.

And he that in his Works denies the Truth of this solemn Affirmation, may be said, in Fact, to be no *Christian*, and if not a *Christian*, very unfit for a *Shepherd* and Feeder of the Flock of *Christ* :

But we hope better Things.

F I N I S.



are habitually vicious, they afford the World
innumerable Opportunities to insult their Pi-
ety, to Testify and the Gospel of Salvation.
Let each of the Company (in any such case
be) but seriously read the 13th Chapter of
Matthew beginning at the 13th Verse.
Hence and hence, says Christ, shall ye
know that ye are not yet ready —
They are called to be ready.
And he that in his whole heart is ready
of this solemn Assurance, may be said in
fact, to be no longer, and is not a Chris-
tian, any more for he is not a Christian
the first of Christ's things.
But we hope that things

F I N I S

